HERE'S HOW TO CONTACT US

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You're invited...

...to join us for a legislative update. We want to hear your ideas and answer your questions.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1999

LOCATIONS AND TIMES:

▶ **10 a.m.**
Park Lodge Elementary Library
6300 100th St. SW

▶ **1:30 p.m.**
University Place Library
3605 Bridgeport Way W

1999 Legislative Session Report

Rep. Gigi Talcott
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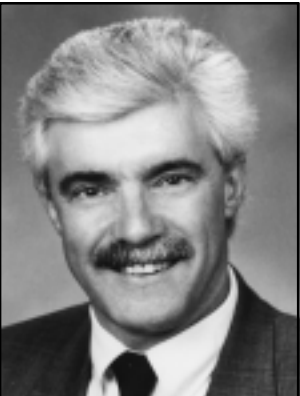
1999 Legislative Session Report

Raising Expectations in Education
by Rep. Gigi Talcott, co-chair, House Education Committee

The greatest gift we can give our children is an education that will inspire and prepare them for the challenges that come after graduation. Our goal this year is to raise the expectations of students, parents, teachers and school administrators. As a teacher, I know that when we ask more, we get more.

The best way to help students excel is to give teachers the tools and training to do the job — and we're doing that. We've listened to parents, teachers, students, and principals. The Education Committee passed legislation to help teachers handle students who disrupt the rest of the class. After four years of statewide success focusing on improving our students' ability to read, we're now placing additional emphasis on math. We're requiring schools to offer programs that challenge their highly capable students. We're also supporting a $1,500 raise for all classroom teachers.

This is an historic, challenging, and hopefully productive time to serve you in the Legislature. Please call, write, or e-mail me whenever you have a concern or feel you can contribute to my being a better and more responsive representative. I value your advice.

Whatever happened to Referendum 47?
by Rep. Mike Carrell, co-chair, House Judiciary Committee

In 1997, after years of attempts to seriously reform the state's property tax system, the Republican-controlled Legislature decided to take the issue to the voters in the form of Referendum 47. The referendum permanently reduced state property taxes by 4.7 percent, limited future state and local property tax increases and created a value-averaging formula to smooth out "spikes" in assessed valuations. The voters overwhelmingly approved the proposal by a majority of 64 percent. If enacted with the true intent of the voters, in the first three years following approval of Ref. 47, a family with a home valued at $110,000 would have saved approximately $140 in property taxes — and an estimated $23,000 over 30 years. Unfortunately, the voters' wishes are not being followed.

Last summer, the Washington State Supreme Court struck down the "spiking" provision of the referendum. Moreover, a number of city and county governments have made a mockery of the levy limit provision, which limits property tax increases to the rate of inflation unless they face a "substantial need."

This session, I have proposed a package of legislation which would reform the property tax system in three fundamental areas. First, it would rein in tax collectors — beginning with the state of Washington. It would also further limit the ability of local governments to increase taxes beyond the inflationary limit established by Referendum 47. Finally, and most importantly for those who are hit the hardest by unrestricted property tax increases, it would help protect those who live on fixed and low incomes from being forced out of their homes.

Property taxes <u>are</u> too high. Under the current rate of growth, homeowners will see property tax levies double every eight years. These proposals will ensure the voters' wishes are being followed and Referendum 47 can be implemented with its true intent.